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17 December 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Operations Division, OSA
Chief, Security Branch, OSA
Chief, Materiel Division, OSA
Chief, Administrative Division, OSA
Chief, Personnel Branch, OSA
Acting Comptroller, OSA
Chief, Communications Staff, OSA

SUBJECT : Re-evaluation of Project IDEALIST Operations Concept
for FY 1963 and FY 1964

1. As an outgrowth of the Special Group meeting of 13 December 1962, and in line with the informal remarks at last Friday's Staff Meeting, I am asking that Operations take the lead in a reassessment of our current Project IDEALIST operations concept, with particular emphasis upon the adequacy of the U-2 inventory as it now stands, i. e., a total of seven available aircraft.

2. For the purpose of this evaluation, the following planning assumptions should be used. They are not listed necessarily in the order of their relative priority.

a. During the period in question, photo reconnaissance of the China Mainland will continue as a requirement.

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c. A standby aircraft [] should be assumed for the detachment at Edwards Air Force Base. While initially programmed for possible use in Cuba, this aircraft may be employed elsewhere as the tactical situation dictates.

d. For the present we must assume one U-2 aircraft (J-75) will be a continuing requirement to support the OXCART program from Edwards, i. e., REDDOT tests, racetrack, etc.

e. Planning should encompass the prospect of aircraft out of commission for periodic inspections, IRAN's, etc. It should also be assumed that during the next twelve months one aircraft will be lost in operations.

f. Over and above the strength at Edwards necessary to support c. and d. above, a requirement will exist to provide a minimum operational capability to conduct stagings from Edwards as may be required, [] Man power planning at Edwards should assume a capability greater than a single staging team, but hopefully less than two full staging enterprises. A minimum capability to provide for c. and d. above should be assumed at all times regardless of other staging commitments.

h. In addition to all the requirements set forth above, it should be assumed that one J-57 U-2 will be required to support OXCART tests []

[] This aircraft will be based at Burbank and will be operated in the ZI rather than overseas. LAC will provide maintenance and pilot personnel for this plane which will have to come from SAC sources on an indefinite loan basis.

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4. To the maximum extent possible, we should not only attempt to cost out the aircraft conversions and additional man power requirement, but wherever possible we should attempt a comparison with those figures for which we have budgetary provision in FY 1963 and FY 1964. This comparison need not be on a line item basis, however.

5. I realize that this is a fairly formidable requirement and that a certain amount of skywriting may be necessary. If at all possible, I would like to convene an initial meeting on this subject Friday, 21 December, and it is hoped that despite the holidays, a final paper might be ready for the DD/R no later than 28 December. Please advise the undersigned if there are any questions in connection with this reassessment not covered by the above. While I believe it is useful for us to consult closely with Colonel Geary's office on this assessment, I would appreciate it if everyone would make it abundantly clear to his staff that at the present time this is a planning exercise.

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)